

**Question for oral answer
to the Commission**

Rule 136

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Subject: An EU ban on the use of wild animals in circuses

Wild animals in circuses are forced to behave in ways never seen in nature and although some of these animals have been bred for tens of generations in captivity, they still perform the behaviour typical of their wild counterparts. The welfare of wild animals in circuses is always severely compromised.

Most of Member States consider that the use of wild animals in circuses does not have any educational or cultural value and, on the contrary, may have a negative impact on the public's perception and respect of wild animals. – indeed 23 have already adopted a total or partial ban on their use.

Health controls for the movement of circus animals between Member States should be applied through Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/2035 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/429. However, studies demonstrate that controls for health or trade and possession of wild animals in circuses are difficult to exercise. The use of endangered species undermines also international efforts to end illegal trade and poaching. Since circuses are not only on the move much of the time, but they also change their names, it is difficult to monitor the births and deaths of captive-bred protected animals, like tigers[1]. These difficulties facilitate the illicit trade of endangered species and their parts in the EU, which jeopardises the effective implementation of EU Wildlife Trade Regulations, including Council Regulation (EC) No 338/972.

Finally, the use of wild animals in circuses regularly leads to accidents involving animal tamers, circus employees and public[2].

Travelling circuses are a service, in line with the definition provided by Article 4(1) of the Services Directive, which EU legislator has the competence to regulate pursuant to Article 114 TFEU.

Does the Commission intend to introduce a ban on the use of wild circus animals in the Union, so as to ensure that the exposure to risks for the illegal trade of wildlife and for public health and security is uniformly mitigated across Member States, and to aid the enforcement of national restrictions for the majority of Member States that already have those in place?

[1] https://media.4paws.org/c/5/5/5/c555a6c3b7150e4bbcb672872796b28b7b2598d6/Report_Europes-second-class-tigers_EN_FP-2020.pdf

[2] <https://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/sites/eurogroup/files/2020-05/E4ACircusReport.pdf>